

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Joins 150 Protesters Fighting Proposed Cuts to CSU Budget and Enrollment

Garamendi rallies Californians outside CSU trustees meeting saying you cannot have best educated workforce on the cheap

LONG BEACH – Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, a California State University trustee, today joined 150 protesters in Long Beach to fight the proposed state budget cuts that will prevent 10,000 qualified students from being admitted to CSU campuses and reduce the quality of education of California's future workforce. The California Faculty Association, Alliance for CSU, students and State Employees Trade Council demonstrated outside the CSU trustee meeting and are backing Garamendi's plan to take the fight to the people of California.

"You cannot have the best educated workforce on the cheap. We have put the education system on a starvation diet and each and every year it becomes weaker," Garamendi said. "Students now take five years to graduate, professors we need we cannot hire, the men and women we need to keep our institutions going, keep the heat on, keep the air conditioning going, keep the toilets flushing cannot be hired. You cannot have the best education system in the world on the cheap. This is about the future of California."

Garamendi urged the protesters to take the fight to the people of California because the proposed cuts will affect the foundation of the state's future workforce including teachers, nurses and doctors. He asked supporters to raise awareness about the cuts by knocking on doors, writing letters, making phone calls and visiting legislators.

"The state cannot grow, it cannot prosper, it cannot succeed unless you invest in its education systems," Garamendi said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the current record high unemployment rate is causing California's budget and economy to worsen by the day. The solution, he said, is to get unemployed Californians back to work through higher education. There is a growing green technology industry but few Californians are trained to fill the jobs. Garamendi said California's colleges, labor and business are willing to work together to develop curriculum, internships and job placement programs for our future workforce. This will not only put Californians back to work but also put tax dollars back into the economy.

“In the fall of 2009, the largest freshman class in California’s history is expected to enter our colleges and universities. Right now students are turning in their applications with high hopes,” Garamendi said. “But the admissions door is already closing. The proposed cuts and tuition hikes (taxes on students) will make it even harder for them to go to college. If we are to meet their high hopes of a college education, we need to invest in them now.”

Link to audio of Garamendi protest speech: http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/20081118_CSU_Rally.mp3